



PRESS NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORMER SPARTANBURG TEACHER PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD PORN CHARGES

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated today that Mark Anthony Soza, age 57, of Roebuck, pled guilty today in federal court in Greenville, to possession of child pornography, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2252A. United States District Judge J. Michelle Childs of Greenville accepted the plea and will impose sentence after she has reviewed the presentence report which will be prepared by the U.S. Probation Office.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that Soza, who was a Spartanburg School District 4 teacher prior to his arrest in February 2012, was a customer of a commercial child pornography operation under

investigation by the Department of Homeland Security. This investigation revealed that Soza completed PayPal transactions which gave him access to websites known to contain child pornography.

On February 22, 2012, agents approached Soza and he confessed that he had large quantities of child pornography on his computers. Agents took the computers and conducted a forensic investigation. The analysis showed that there were multiple images and videos of children under the age of 18 engaged in sexual acts and the lascivious display of the genitals. Mr. Nettles stated the maximum penalty Soza can receive is a fine of \$250,000 and/or imprisonment for 10 years, plus a special assessment of \$100.00.

The case was investigated by agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Investigations. Assistant United States Attorney Bill Watkins of the Greenville office handled the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

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